

MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY AND VETERANS AFFAIRS

Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency

Create Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency

Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency (MVAA) should be treated as a distinct and separate mission due to the opportunity for Michigan, the complexity and interconnected nature of Veterans issues between departments and external stakeholders, and to achieve parity at the national level.

MVAA needs to be equipped to address and eliminate the shortcomings that contribute to Michigan's current disparate service delivery model. The new organizational model should be resourced to establish goals, marshal resources, coordinate between state, federal and local partners, and conduct targeted awareness and outreach campaigns.

This will include adding new sections to the existing Veterans Affairs structure that would work together to establish goals, conduct targeted public awareness and outreach communications campaigns and direct "boots on the ground" to achieve local, regional, and statewide goals.

The goal will be to begin a phased implementation beginning in March 2013 and completed by the beginning of FY14 on 1 October 2013.

The MVAA has identified opportunities to radically improve the coordination of efforts within state government that will improve the Veteran's experience and create efficiencies for Michigan.

- Create a "Strategy Section" Committed to Developing Strategies and Coordinating Efforts

MVAA would benefit from having a committed planning and coordination cell focused on:

1. Developing tangible service delivery goals
2. Creating a strategic plan to achieve goals through targeted outreach
3. Improving coordination between stakeholders

- Increased Communication and Awareness

A professional communications section should be capable of accomplishing the following:

1. Strategic Communications
2. Vet Portal and Social Media
3. VetraSpec and DD214 Management
4. Customer Service Center

- Targeted Outreach & Performance Management

This section should include focused efforts on:

- Increased Collaboration with VSO's
 - The MVAA believes that the State can improve with the inclusion of targeted goals and performance management measurements to their contracts with the state. The goals should be centered on enrollment and the quality of the packets submitted to USVA.
- Improved Training for Claims Agents
 - Training is critical. The introduction of performance management, new technologies and state accreditation will be best supported with a concerted, regularly scheduled training effort as the state increases its Veterans outreach.
- Mobile Outreach to Strategic Areas
 - The USVA Accreditation process will require Michigan to add 5 full-time claims agents capable of performing this mission.

Develop a Customer Service Model that creates "No Wrong Door" to meet current and future needs

Michigan needs a "world class" service model that can add value to the Veteran and their family as well as the service provider community.

Create Targeted Goals and Metrics to Measure Performance

MVAA needs realistic goals and metrics to target efforts and measure progress. The workgroup identified and communicated with benchmark states that share similar demographics with Michigan but demonstrate measurable success. Although states had tried different techniques, the common themes between states included unity of effort, comprehensive strategy, public awareness/outreach efforts and a one-stop service for the Vet.

Recommended metric focus areas include:

- Healthcare
 - Number enrolled in VA Healthcare
 - Number utilizing VA Healthcare
- Employment
 - Veteran unemployment rate compared to civilian unemployment rate
 - Utilization of the Veteran Retraining Assistance Program (VRAP)
 - Labor market participation rate
- Education
 - GI Bill Enrollment/Utilization
 - Retention/Degree Completion
 - Number of Veteran students paying above in-state tuition

- Pension and Disability Compensation*
 - % of fully developed packets
- Aid & Attendance*

* - *additional research required*

- **Community Engagement Strategy – (To be conducted in 2013)**

This will consist of a coordinated pilot in two metropolitan areas of the state (Wayne and Kent counties) concentrated on integrating non-profit and non-governmental programming with state and federal government provided services to Veterans.